

I carry a heavy heart today. A heavy heart over the passing of one of the giants of Asian American Journalism, and my dear friend: Mr. Sam Chu Lin.

Sam was a pioneer; not just in the Asian American Community, but in the entire field of journalism.

A reporter par excellence – news anchor – radio announcer – media consultant – a conscience, of and for, American journalism for almost four decades.

As one of the first Asian American network reporters in New York City, he announced to the nation on CBS News, the fall of Saigon.

He interviewed Presidents and world leaders. He covered earthquakes and major disasters.

He reported from China the government crackdown on the democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

His life was one of endless commitment to truth-seeking and justice for all Americans – but especially for his brothers and sisters in the Asian American Community.

He believed “informing and helping others is what makes journalism exciting.” He also believed his beloved career in journalism was an opportunity to use his roots for a positive purpose.

His relentless pursuit of excellence in journalism was legendary. He once convinced ABC’s Nightline to do a program called “Asian American – When Your Neighbor Looks Like the Enemy.” After doing so, he helped book the guest, checked the script for accuracy, and

found historical footage for the broadcast. He went on to spend the entire next year educating the executive producer about how Asian Americans have been unfairly stereotyped because of the campaign fundraising and spy scandals.

The program went on to be the highest rated show in its time slot beating out both Jay Leno and David Letterman in the national ratings.

Sam was a visionary -- for that show would be as relevant today as it was when it first aired. I have no doubt if Sam were still with us, he would be haranguing the current producers to replay it today to show Americans just how little we've learned from our history.

His advocacy on behalf of civil rights and justice for Asian Americans continued to the day he died. It was Sam's interview with Senator John McCain that enlightened the Senator to the plight of citizenship denial for Asian American Civil War Veterans. And it was Sam Chu Lin's coverage at the critical junctures of Dr. Wen Ho Lee, Captain James Yee and Captain James Wang's careers that kept the Asian Pacific civil rights community rallying to their defense.

He continued to this day investigating, advocating, and agitating on behalf of Asian Americans as a media consultant and an independent reporter for several newspapers.

His humbleness belied his accomplishments. He was the recipient of awards across the entire spectrum of journalism -- from the Associated Press and UPI, to the Golden Mike, National Headliner Award for Best Documentary to name but a few. Just this past August he was honored with the Spirit of America Award by the Chinese American Citizens Alliance.

In spite of his accomplishments, he never lost the value of humility or the heartfelt treasure of friendship. He was my dear friend and mentor. My heart goes out to his wife, Judy, and his sons, Mark and Christopher. His absence in my life and in the Asian Community is irreplaceable.

But his body of work will live on and inspire generations of aspiring young Asian Americans to

dream big dreams, and then go on to realize them.

It has been said that Asian American men are some of America's best kept secrets. Sam Chu Lin helped to change that. There is a story of a short man who was in the midst of some tall men. One of the taller men said to him, "You must feel pretty small right now." The man replied, "Yes, I feel like a dime in the midst of nickels."

Sam Chu Lin was no dime amongst nickels. He was a silver dollar amongst dimes. For in fact, the lifetime body of accomplishments of Sam Chu Lin has forever changed the face of American journalism.